THE MASTER-PAINTERS OF BRITAIN: II

EDITED BY

GLEESON WHITE

THE MASTER PAINTERS OF BRITAIN

The Blessed Damozel

THE

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OF BRITAIN

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GLEESON WHITE

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AUTHOR OF 'ENGLISH ILLUSTRATION: THE SIXTIES'

IN FOUR VOLUMES

VOL. II

LONDON
THE CAXTON PUBLISHING CO.

Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable, Printers to Her Majesty

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INTRODUCTORY

THE painters to whom the earlier part of this volume is devoted include but few of the greatest names in British art. Nor did the period of their activity witness any great revolt against tradition, such as that inaugurated by John Constable. Yet, although the period is one of transition, the new revolt which followed so close upon its heels, a protest this time not against the classic traditions of landscape alone but against well-nigh all the conventions of painting since the time of Raphael, the so-called 'Pre-Raphaelite' movement, comes into this, our second volume. That the liberty Constable had promoted suffered the inevitable law of reaction, which required a certain time before the forces he had let loose could again gather together for a new movement, would be a tempting theory and one obedient to the natural laws of evolution, yet it must not be insisted upon. It would be unwise to believe that art is always progressing, still more that its law of progress is inevitable; indeed, to justify such a theory one must confine the evidence mainly to technique, and even then the fallacy would soon be revealed. Art, which is imagination shaped, would seem to be purely a matter of personality. If a few great artists of equal power chance to be living at the same time, we call their period splendid, forgetting that the average is not greatly raised by the presence of masterly exceptions, or if it be, that however high, it still remains the average. It is the exception which is remembered in art as in other things, and the men whose works begin this volume show very few exceptionally gifted painters, and perhaps no pictures that were distinctly new forces in art.

But even at the period in question, a certain scholarly technique commands perfunctory respect. There is no doubt that where genius is not, academic knowledge and profound regard for precedent are the next best qualities. But there can never be a substitute for the individually new presentation of eternal verities which men call genius. Yet the academic qualities—that is to say, all those things which can be taught or acquired—were fully represented at this date. Experiment that fails has little more chance of immortality than dull obedience to precedent which succeeds. Each newly successful revolution appears to banish for ever the traditions it attacked; yet, as the history of art shows clearly, the old traditions survive, purged it may be of some diseases contracted by age, but all the same destined to re-attract disciples when the conquering style has become the fashion of the hour and vulgarised by feeble imitation.

Social factors were responsible for the course of painting at the beginning of the nineteenth century. A German critic has projected a very plausible theory to account for the didactic efforts which from this date seem to have been almost universally accepted by Britain, so that painters were expected to be 'public counsellors and almost lay-preachers.' As he points out, and truly, before this time the patronage of the arts had been almost entirely in the hands of the nobility, who alone enjoyed the luxuries of prosperity, travel, reading and leisure. But a rich middle-class was now coming into existence, which was also leisured and to some extent travelled. These new patrons knew nothing and cared less for the technique of painting, or for the picture as a picture. They were willing to accept even genius, so long as it did not bore them; they demanded of a picture that it should amuse or instruct, and the more readily it pointed a moral or raised a smile the more eagerly they welcomed it.

The view which was then accepted of the purpose of the arts, especially of pictures, is still too generally prevalent. The moral lesson of a painting is far more often discussed than its beauty as a scheme of colour, or its revelation of some hitherto disregarded aspect of nature. Many people would have morality rampant even in a landscape; these show no little perverted ingenuity in evolving sermons from stones and parables from scenery. A still larger class, while demanding the moral, is yet far more concerned with the way it tells its story than with the message it conveys. Chiefly attracted by the number of details, it believes the best picture to be the one that reveals most imitative dexterity under close observation. These art-lovers do not regard a painting as a scene in a play or a view from a height, to be looked at from a given distance, but as a collection of specimens set in a glass case, when each one, if you wish, can be looked at with a microscope. Of course such a comparison is purposely exaggerated, but it contains the elements of the truth. The first class of pictures, whether by Velasquez or Constable, by Titian or Corot, may be called 'impressions'; the latter, whether by the early Italians or later Dutchmen, by Maclise or Mr. Alma Tadema, may be called 'catalogues.' Yet these terms need not be taken as implying praise or censure. Beauty in widely varied aspects may be revealed in the best of both schools.

Lest these words 'impression' and 'catalogue' fail to convey to a lay mind the difference between the extremes of pictorial art, at the risk of restating the obvious, a digression may be pardoned. In literature we find similar methods adopted: for instance, on the one hand Richard Jefferies, who notes down, as in a stenographic report, fact after fact, all, it may be, linked together by the poetic idea in his mind; and, on the other a poet who, by a happily chosen phrase, imparts instantly the same effect that the author of *A Pageant of Summer* reveals only after careful reading of many pages. In Jefferies' description of a pastoral scene you are told of the doings of the early worm and the still earlier bird, of the plants and flowers, the winds and the sky, the scents and sounds. As each

paragraph yields up its meaning, a new factor of the scene is impressed on the reader's mind, but the long sequence must be retained in his memory before he can project for himself the whole picture which has been gradually unfolded.

On the other hand, a poet can flash you the essentials of the scene in a line, or, if his subject be more complex, in a stanza, and the picture he has dashed in will rival the former in the truth of its impression.

For instance, is not a summer landscape depicted instantaneously in these four lines by Mr. Andrew Lang ?—

'When clamour that doves in the lindens keep
Mingles with musical plash of the weir,
Where drowned green tresses of crowsfoot creep,
Then comes in the sweet of the year.'

The penultimate line alone is a complete picture. Mr. Andrew Lang s botany may be accurate or not, it may be crowsfoot or the Canadian water-weed that one recalls as being swayed in the clear stream, but to a casual reader the sum of a thousand memories is reawakened, and the few words call up a perfect landscape, where atmosphere, colour, sound and even odours all play their part.

Or take this, a still more definite picture—one that almost reveals the 'brush-marks' and the 'impasto' of a painter :—

'The sun as he journeys
His rounds on the lower
Ascents of the blue,
Washes the roofs
And the hillsides with clarity,
Charms the dark pools
Till they break into pictures,
Scatters magnificent
Alms to the beggar-trees,
Touches the mist folk
That crowd to his escort
Into translucencies
Radiant and ravishing,
As with the visible
Spirit of Summer,
Gloriously vaporised,
Visioned in gold.'

This extract, from Mr. W. E. Henley's *Indian Summer*, is in no way a catalogue, but a picture rapidly painted in words which yield a singularly definite impression.

Only by some such parallel is it easy to make clear the difference between the two great classes of pictures. It must not be forgotten that if most paintings are not wholly of one class or the other, yet in few examples are the two methods sufficiently balanced that you need hesitate as to which class the painting belongs.

Curiously enough, the older pictures—many even in the early nineteenth century—recognised often the larger importance of being pictures first and nature-imitation after. But this was chiefly due to their inspiration being mostly second-hand.

Their reverence for the classics still kept obedience to the letter; they felt the importance of making the painting a conventionally harmonious presentation of selected facts, although in doing so they too often cramped their subject to a pre-arranged form. As when, to revert again to literature for a simile, they produced catalogues in heroic couplets, or modified their own impression of nature according to tradition of earlier masters' impressions, using certain stock phrases—'sylvan shades,' 'breezy morn,' and the like—instead of their own natural speech.

It was a state of transition and timidity. On the one hand painters hesitated to employ the idiom understanded of the people; on the other they rebelled against the stock phrases, which had lost so much of their pristine vigour by too frequent repetition.

With Mulready, who begins this volume, we have a cultured academic painter, who was by no means a dry-as-dust pedant. Mr. Ruskin, the champion of the new-born pre-Raphaelites, could yet write of a dog Mulready has painted in his 'Choosing the Wedding Gown': 'It displays the most wonderful, because the most dignified, finish in the expression of anatomy and covering of muscle and hide, and assuredly the most perfect unity of drawing and colour which the entire range of ancient and modern art can exhibit.' Thus we find that even the most ardent disciple of the newer revolt did not refuse to discover the qualities he admired in work conceived on wholly diverse lines to those he supported at the time. It is true that he calls another painting by the artist 'perhaps the most forcible illustration ever given of the frivolous application of great powers.' Mulready appealed to the middle-class ideal, but he did so without loss of dignity, so that his works should at least command our respect, however dull they may seem.

William Hunt, a fellow-student of Mulready, although unrepresented in our selection, must not be forgotten. He was a painter of still-life and peasants; of whom Mr. Ruskin said, 'his drawings are illustrative of rural life in its veracity and purity, without the slightest endeavour at idealisation, and still less with any wish to caricature or deplore its imperfections,' and his first pieces 'absolutely right in colour, in light and shade, and without any rivalship in past or present art.'

Hilton, next in order, is far more academic; for, while Mulready ventured to depict common life, although he could not forget academic tradition entirely, Hilton essayed the grander style, and revealed something short of mastery even in his most successful efforts. With Etty we have a fine colourist, whose love for the nude, never widely popular in Britain, was a hindrance possibly to his immediate success, if ultimately he found favour and became an Academician. He had small influence on the art of England; his works were evidently inspired by foreign schools, and have little in common with British taste. With Martin—a certain exaggerated melodrama devoted to lofty subjects—we have a link between Fuseli and Gustave Doré. Sir Charles Eastlake, sometime President, is less interesting; for his Biblical pictures, if irreproachably correct, are singularly uninspired, and

have as little chance of immortality as the printed theology of the same period. With Webster we find a sturdy example of the painter who is satisfied to catalogue incidents of childhood and peasant life. His works are masterpieces of their sort, and may be documents for social historians of the future, even if they lose their hold upon artists. C. R. Leslie, a painter of literary anecdote, plays little part in the story of the development of native art. His manner is distinctly British, and an excellent example of the illustrator who happens to devote his energy to easel-pictures instead of books. Sir Edwin Landseer, next in date, is so enormously popular even to-day that any confession of lack of sympathy with his work might be construed as an attempt on the part of the critic to pose as a 'superior person.' So lately as 1887 a fellow-academician, summing up fifty years of British art, said: 'The fame of Edwin Landseer, like that of Schiller's brave man, rings loud like organ tones or the clang of bells'; yet even so staunch a eulogist added, 'What posterity will say of his claims is not for us to judge.'[1] Yet, recognising his admirable technique at times, and his power to awaken honourable emotions from gentle and simple, a candid observer feels that silence is the only refuge. No one is catholic enough to be entirely just in all his judgments, and possibly the verdict of the future may reinstate Landseer's place among great painters. If his idealised animals are wholly admirable for their art or their fidelity to nature, one sins in good company in failing to recognise the fact.

The 'technical accuracy' of John Lewis's paintings provoked Mr. Ruskin to declare that they 'surpass in execution everything extant since Carpaccio.' Even to-day, when the lack of certain qualities militates against unqualified approval, their fine mosaic of brilliant pigment and their vivid representation of Eastern light mark them as destined to maintain an honourable place in British art.

Thomas Sidney Cooper, Sir Francis Grant, P.R.A., Richard Redgrave, R.A., Solomon Hart, R.A., J. R. Herbert, R.A., may be passed with mere mention. The next in date, Paul Falconer Poole, R.A., although unrepresented in this selection, should not be forgotten, for his works show imagination and fancy, and if his achievements fell short of mastery, they aimed high and still maintain their interest. W. E. Frost, R.A., C. W. Cope, R.A., Alfred Elmore, R.A., Richard Ansdell, an animal painter of no little power, may also be dismissed with a bare word.

In Maclise we encounter a master of his kind, and one eminently British. It is interesting to compare his view of the 'Play Scene in Hamlet' with that by Mr. E. A. Abbey, exhibited half a century later. Both may be considered as 'up-to-date' illustrations of their time, yet, passing again and again from one to other, and recognising that the qualities which each painter deemed most valuable are not the same, the one conviction left upon the mind of the present writer is the utter

[1] *Fifty Years of British Art.* By J. E. Hodgson, R.A. Heywood, 1887.

folly of those who believe in the constant progression of art. The later painting shows that science may indeed claim to be still growing, but also that the literary picture of 1897 differs little in its essentials from that of 1842; it is better liked by contemporaries, of course, but that it will delight more the cognoscenti of 1997 is at least doubtful. The National Gallery catalogue—as a rule most reticent in criticism—says that many of Maclise's works, although of the highest ability, are not generally pleasing in their tone of colouring: this is an official hint that the fame of the once 'great painter' is rapidly diminishing. Nor need we linger over the works of Augustus Egg, R.A., W. C. T. Dobson, R.A., J. C. Horsley, R.A., nor do more than mention the paintings of John Phillip, R.A. (the Spanish Phillip), who brought, perhaps, a new field of *genre* into British art.

Many famous Scots painters, besides Harvey, Duncan, Fettes Douglas, and others herein represented, played honourable parts in the story of British art. Yet to name even the most worthy of native artists is impossible within these limits.

With Sir John Gilbert, R.A., we encounter a distinctly English painter, who is *facile princeps* as an illustrator, although possibly 'prince of facility' would be a better synonym than the literal translation of the Latin tag. For the exuberant vitality of this artist is simply amazing. Yet, although his oil paintings appear to have been as rapidly executed as his drawings on wood, they show fine technique and a vivid sense of colour; he of all Britons has more of the florid imagination of Rubens and no little of his splendour, without lapsing into a riotous display of forms and colours that only just escape vulgarity by the grand manner which controls them. Sir John Gilbert has style, colour, and a strong dramatic sense, more shown possibly in his composition than in the facial expression or pose of any single figure. He is derived from no previous painter; he has left no follower. It is significant to find that despite his fecundity and power he has escaped even Dr. Müther's omnivorous appetite for modern painters, which would seem to indicate that he has yet to be 'discovered' by foreign critics. In England, long before his death he had won hearty appreciation for his art from younger critics especially, even as his earlier successes scored victories both popular and technical. His influence may have been small, owing in part to the fact that to rival him would require no little of his peculiar talent.

Mr. G. F. Watts, another veteran, is also alone, so far as Britons are concerned, and with few followers. Except for the accident of his birth he might be the last of the old masters—a belated Tiepolo—without the decadence which marks the last of the old masters of Italy. If he has sometimes emphasised the counsellor, and made didactic morality his chief aim, yet in doing so he has never forgotten the painter. Despite a technique of his own, quite out of touch with modern virtuosity, he convinces even his most unsympathetic critics, and has added at least half a dozen veritable masterpieces to British art, and a series of portraits which are

worthy the fame of their heroes. That he has given so large a number of his works to the British nation, and declined titles and official honours must also be recorded to his credit; still more noteworthy is his staunch loyalty to poetic subjects. Throughout the days of triviality, realism, impression, and the triumph of the æsthetic school he steadfastly maintained his early ideal. To remember that he was working before the great pre-Raphaelite movement, and remained unaffected by it, is indirect evidence of his strongly marked personality, that rose above the mediocrity before the P.R.B., and yet was untouched by all that sprang from that movement.

George Mason, by actual date of birth, comes next in order, but as his work is essentially of the school which came just after the pre-Raphaelite, at this place a mere mention must suffice. Mr. W. P. Frith, R.A., who follows, also supplies no link in the chain, and may be considered later.

With Madox-Brown and Holman Hunt we arrive at the real beginners of the movement which the actual pre-Raphaelites—Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Millais—formulated. A popular fallacy, that the members and followers of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (the P.R.B., as they call themselves) were bent on imitating the primitive Italians in subject as well as treatment, needs to be contradicted before considering their aims, which Mr. Ruskin has explained at length, and also in brief. For the passage which follows is as terse a summary of the main objects of the revolt as could be phrased, and as it comes from the most ardent champion for the body, it may be better to quote it than to transcribe Dante Gabriel Rossetti's programme in full: 'Pre-Raphaelite subjects must usually be of real persons in a solid world, not of personifications in a vaporous one.' In other words, the new effort was towards nature-imitation, to paint people, places, and things as like actuality as possible, to substitute plain facts for idealised fancies—'a mere heartless reiteration of the model,' which went so far as to provoke the absurd charge, that some of the early pre-Raphaelite pictures were actual coloured photographs. In these days it must not be forgotten that sharp accuracy was the supposed ideal of the camera; and that the recognition of the alteration in the appearance of things seen by the normal vision, when contrasted with their supposed appearance, based on a fore-knowledge of the objects, was in the programme of neither painter nor photographer. But here the sources of the ideal of the pre-Raphaelites cannot be discussed even briefly, still less can its tendencies be adequately recorded. A whole mass of literature is available, in which the *pros* and *cons* of its argument are debated at length. To the average person to-day the word pre-Raphaelite suggests something 'æsthetic' in the sense the word was employed during the eighties. Coined to express a method with well-defined technical aims, it has been distorted to include all 'conventionally decorative' illustration, and nearly all paintings, in whatever method, of poetic and imaginative subjects especially, the somewhat archaic manner of the early Italians is more or less distinctly evident.

The pre-Raphaelite idea seems to have taken colour from, if it was not in great part founded on, the Gothic Revival. The first germs of this newly awakened interest in mediæval art may be traced to Horace Walpole's romance, *The Castle of Otranto*, and his house at Strawberry Hill. Thence, with Beckford's Fonthill Abbey, the Waverley Novels, the New Houses of Parliament, and the Oxford Movement, we find the growing tendency that Englishmen should turn away from the Greek classic, an exotic which in England followed the naturalisation of the Renaissance and was never fully acclimatised, and study anew the architecture and legend, the missal paintings, stained glass, wood carvings, and other examples of the applied arts of their own forebears. Hence, possibly, the strongly marked 'Gothic' tendency, which is characteristic of the pre-Raphaelites, and is more evident in the work of their followers. The expression may have come from Giotto and the Italian school that succeeded him, but the subjects are more often drawn from Arthurian legend and Anglican history. It is this which separates the pre-Raphaelite revival from the earlier Renaissance, which was wholly classic in its source, although (so far as I am aware) it has never been formulated as part of its creed.

Historically it begins with Ford Madox-Brown, whose Westminster frescoes had made him the hero of Rossetti. The seven members who formed the actual brotherhood (which was practically dissolved before its rules were formulated), included, besides Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his brother William, John Everett Millais, W. Holman Hunt, F. G. Stephens (the well-known writer upon art), Thomas Woolner (the sculptor), and James Collinson. Its magazine, *The Germ*, which only reached a fourth number, started a school of literature which was not only the earliest official *apologia* for the pre-Raphaelite idea, but the first of a host of publications conceived on not dissimilar lines, which range from *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, 1856, to *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, *The Dial*, *The Pageant*, and even to *The Knight Errant* of Boston, U.S., and certain esoteric and *decadent* periodicals of France and Belgium in the late nineties.

This aspect of the movement has perhaps become more familiar to the public than the veritable purpose of the much-talked-of brotherhood. Dozens of people would never suspect that Mr. Holman Hunt's 'May Morning on Magdalen Tower,' with its realistic detail and its vivid colour, is a legitimate example of the P.R.B. ideal, while they would accept Sir Edward Burne-Jones's pictures, or even Mr. Aubrey Beardsley's designs, as lineal descendants. All the same, the decorative movement, which is so often confounded with the realistic intensity of the earlier school, started into being from the hands of Ford Madox-Brown, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and was continued by Burne-Jones and William Morris—of whom all sorts of painters and designers avow themselves disciples to-day. Therefore it is not surprising to find that the general public are apt to confuse the later aspect of decorative painting with the sturdy, if still more impassioned, work of the true

P.R.B. In this volume we have not 'Christ at the Home of His Parents' by Millais, nor an example of the earliest Rossetti's, but Millais's 'Lorenzo and Isabella.' 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona' by Mr. W. Holman Hunt, and Ford Madox-Brown's 'Work' may be regarded as typical of the original ideals of the brother-hood, while 'Dante's Dream' and 'The Blessed Damozel' foreshadow its later phase, to be exemplified more fully by works of Sir Edward Burne-Jones and many others in our succeeding volume.

Although the works of Mr. W. P. Frith won the admiration of the British public to a sensational extent, so that policemen had to be placed in front of certain of his pictures at the Royal Academy Exhibition to marshal the crowds surrounding them, he cannot be said to have founded or developed any new schools of painting. As a moralist he merely followed Hogarth, and gave the average citizen melo-dramatic or domestic groups, with real if commonplace interest presented simply; as a painter, technically considered, he has no surprises and no great failings, but keeps to the mean average of excellence that is in itself depressing. Nor need H. Le Jeune, F. R. Pickersgill, James Sant, Goodall, Faed, Erskine Nicol, and many others, detain us. They all have an appointed place in the British art which need not be under-estimated, even if at the moment their work fails to provoke admiration or aversion, and appears merely average. Sir Noel Paton, by his conquests of fairyland, has a more personal interest; his sacred pictures, dear as they are to many still living, will probably, with Overbeck and others, fail to attract new audiences when these are dispersed. But here this running commentary must be suspended. With the pre-Raphaelite force let loose we have the last purely British protest against convention. In the following volumes every important new influence must be credited to a foreign source, although of these not a few might possibly be traced still further back to John Constable or the pre-Raphaelites. But as they came to England they bore a foreign accent. The *plein-air* school and the Impressionists of France, the art of Japan, the personality of Mr. Whistler, the fantastic conceptions of Boecklin, and the Secessionists of Munich—all these have played greater or lesser parts in the later moods of British painting; but all are too near to be clearly defined, so that without ignoring certain native forces at work to-day, we may accept the letters 'P.R.B.' as the latest symbol for revolt not yet fully accomplished, even as the letters 'R.A.' stand more or less accurately for obedience to accepted, and not necessarily unworthy, tradition. A belief is growing that 'art' is no close secret of any corporation, but a still closer secret of the individual, which he himself can never express except through the medium of his work. The often-quoted definition of Zola: 'Art is nature seen through a temperament,' with which the first volume of this work opened, may close the second. For the only deduction that appears to be well founded is that the progress of art is a pure matter of accident. To-day a real artist is born in England; to-morrow

Spitzbergen or Ceylon may send us one. Hence the art of Britain only now and again can be said to supply an integral part of the art of the world; but British painting may be allowed to score its modest and perhaps only local triumphs whether a veritable genius chance to be amongst it to throw the rest out of scale, or whether for a season great painters happen to be citizens of other nationality.

G. W.

THE FIGHT INTERRUPTED

By William Mulready, r.a.

PAINTED in 1816, this is one of Mulready's largest pictures, and characteristic of his manner. Possibly another half-century or so will impart to it a certain picturesqueness which it seems to lack somewhat at present. The costumes of the boys, notably that of the urchin in a 'swallow-tail' coat and trousers, who is seen examining critically the eye of one of the combatants, appear to us more grotesque than attractive. The spirit of the work suggests a very moral Sunday-school pamphlet, and the didactic purpose of the picture unluckily is not sufficiently remote from the illustration such a tract might bear on its front page to be entirely acceptable as a painting. These trifling objections do not affect many sterling qualities in the work itself, and they are only put down to explain why a certain prim, old-fashioned manner seems to age Mulready's work without adding grace to it thereby.

This same picture of 'the most distinguished of British *genre* painters,' has been called 'most perfect in his most perfect manner—one of those works of fine colour and consummate execution in which his art culminated.'

But Mulready must not be deprived of his rightful eminence because for the moment his themes and manner are both out of touch with the prevailing mood. Peasant-boys and village incidents are not popular to-day. His studies show him to be a fine artist, and his illustrations to the *Vicar of Wakefield* (1843) are distinctly notable, and a very important link in the chain that stretches down to Millais and the men of 'the Sixties'; while his famous design for a postal envelope makes his name a household word in regions quite unconnected with art. This painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1816. Elected in 1815 A.R.A., before it was hung he had been made R.A., a procedure which is almost, if not quite, unique. The painting is now in the Sheepshanks Collection at South Kensington Museum.

1. *The Fight Interrupted* (*Mulready*).

CHOOSING THE WEDDING GOWN

By William Mulready, r.a.

IT would be hard to find a more popular picture than this, if the number of times it has been reproduced be a true test of wide-spread appreciation. The official catalogue of South Kensington draws attention to its force and brilliancy and the remarkable rendering of the texture of its draperies. It has been called the painter's masterpiece, and not unjustly; for to-day, when Mulready's undoubted power is perhaps under-estimated, this picture rarely fails to extort generous approval even from critics opposed to the academic ideal which it represents.

For it is a delightfully rendered piece of *genre*—a simple domestic incident recorded without undue sentimentality. If its grouping is artificial, and its composition marked by pre-arranged negligence, the main purpose is not distracted thereby. Its colour is rich, and its drawing masterly. In short, it is a very worthy example of the British school at its best. It would be foolish to expect to find in Mulready the qualities we expect from an artist of his calibre to-day. But to condemn him for their absence were not less foolish.

He was a great draughtsman, and, compared with his fellows, a great artist; that he is not one of the great master-painters of Europe may be conceded without depriving him of that lesser place in the roll of artists which he fully deserves.

The painting was shown at the Royal Academy in 1846, and is No. 145 of the collection in South Kensington.

2. *Choosing the Wedding Gown* (*Mulready*).

CHRIST CROWNED WITH THORNS

By William Hilton, r.a.

THIS picture, bought by the directors of the British Institution, placed for a while in St. Peter's Church, Pimlico, and the first purchase, in 1877, of the Chantrey Bequest Committee, is a typical example of a class which is far more rare in our native art than might be expected. The comparative neglect of Biblical themes by British painters is possibly due to the old Puritan distaste for pictures in churches. Few private collectors would choose a modern version of sacred story to hang in their dining-room, the one place set aside by long tradition for serious oil-paintings. It is true that some years ago certain English churches contained pictures over the altar; but the fashion did not last long, and as the history of this painting shows, the tendency in recent times is to oust them from the building.

Hilton proved by this work, and by his 'The Angel delivering St. Peter from Prison,' 'The Crucifixion,' and others, that he was able to treat such themes with dignity and a certain stateliness, based, it is true, on the traditions of the old masters, but nevertheless more than mere imitations of their methods.

The huge popular success of Gustave Doré's paintings, and of those by Tissot, which followed them at the same Gallery, shows that 'the great heart of the British public' is still touched by representations of the life of Christ; but it is hard to discover any example by a British artist that has at once secured a place among the masterpieces of the art, and become really popular with the masses. Several have nearly pleased both parties, but scarce one has gained a place in every devout household, and also in the list of European masterpieces.

This dramatic, and in many respects admirable, presentation of Christ is scarcely known; indeed, very few of Hilton's pictures have been engraved, a silent but convincing proof that those best qualified to gauge the taste of the public (despite its greed for sentimental figures clinging to crosses, and the Christmas-card subject generally) distrust its appreciation of more scholarly efforts to represent the chief incidents in its orthodox creed.

The painting is among the Chantrey Bequest purchases, which, after many wanderings, have at length found a permanent home at Millbank.

3. *Christ Crowned with Thorns* (*Hilton*).

NYMPH AND SATYRS

By William Etty, r.a.

ALTHOUGH classical subjects, painted chiefly to give opportunity for a study of the nude, have rarely found favour among exponents in England, yet no representative selection of British work should omit an example of Etty, who, more often than any previous British painter, chose themes of this order. The one here reproduced is his diploma picture, which, in accordance with the rules of the Royal Academy of Arts, must be deposited within six months of the artist's election. The subject is so evidently merely an excuse for a composition after the manner of the old masters that one need not attempt to describe it; nor can you regard this work as expressing fully Etty's aim in all his important pictures, which was, to quote his own words, 'to paint some great moral on the heart.'

The flesh tints of the sleeping nymph are contrasted with the warmer hues of the satyrs; the landscape is merely by way of filling the space, and the tambourine in the foreground is obviously introduced to supply a harmonious line to break the sweep of the drapery. Etty's most important work, 'The Combat,' in the National Gallery of Scotland, which would have represented him more adequately, is in so bad a state, owing to decay of the pigments employed, that no photograph could be a success. Hence in place of the too familiar 'Youth at the Prow and Pleasure at the Helm,' or the equally known 'Bather, by the doubtful breeze alarmed' of the National Gallery, it seemed best to choose a no less typical picture, that is also accessible to those of the public sufficiently daring to discover the galleries devoted to the Gibson statues and Diploma pictures. Although the doorway leading where these collections are housed is under the portico of the Royal Academy itself, it is probable that out of every thousand visitors to the latter, not ten are aware of the very existence of the others; and possibly of these ten scarce one has climbed the stairs and studied the really interesting collection for himself.

4. *Nymph and Satyrs* (*Etty*).

THE PLAINS OF HEAVEN

By John Martin

TO include in this collection an example of a once popular painter whose very name is in danger of being forgotten is but common justice. John Martin's 'The Destruction of Pompeii,' once in the National Gallery, is 'temporarily removed'—a fate that has befallen many second-rate pictures; but if as a painter he cannot be placed in the front rank, yet he is more than a maker of didactic pictures, who won the hearts of the middle classes by a sensational treatment of Biblical subjects. He was to some extent the Gustave Doré of his period, fertile in invention, with a distinct power of suggesting the glories of Paradise or the terror of some melodramatic incident—such as 'Belshazzar's Feast,' 'The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah,' or 'The Great Day of Wrath.' Accepted as the foremost Biblical illustrator, his engravings were the pride—if not an unalloyed joy also to the younger members of the family—of most respectable Puritan households, and his conceptions of a future state were probably responsible for moulding the belief of millions.

It is easy to sneer at Martin's imaginings, but in their way they succeeded in impressing his audience, and certainly owed little to any predecessor. If his dramatic effects seem theatrical to-day, and his glories of Paradise rather too near the hagiology of a Christmas card, yet he gained the end he sought, and undoubtedly influenced many illustrators who came after him, even if his paintings left no followers to employ similar methods. But many of his large canvases were prepared chiefly with a view to engravings being made therefrom. Hence the lack of certain qualities might be pardoned to some extent; but the utmost charity is unable to discover reasonable defence for his technique.

Indeed, these paintings have only historical interest owing to their widespread popularity; and yet, perhaps, they rewakened slumbering imagination in those Puritan households which still fought shy of painting—banished so long from their churches. Martin certainly attempted to realise his scenes—not in statuesque classic imitations of Michel Angelo, but in the idiom of his time. For this he deserves such praise as we give Mr. George Tinworth for expressing the idiom of the average church- or chapel-goer to-day in his terracotta bas-reliefs. In other words, he satisfied a not very exigeant audience—theologically and artistically—without sacrificing entirely certain qualities that pertain to higher forms of art.

The picture was shown lately at the Victorian Era Exhibition: the reproduction here is from the engraving.

5. *The Plains of Heaven* (*Martin*).

TENDING SHEEP

By John Linnell

THIS painting, exhibited at the Winter Exhibition of the Royal Academy, 1883 (when two galleries were devoted to the work of John Linnell, who had died in the previous year), is typical of those pastorals which won him so high a reputation among collectors. Yet fertile though he was in subject-pictures, portraits, and landscapes, it is doubtful whether his once great fame will be maintained; so far as the sale-rooms are evidence, it would seem certainly that it will not be increased. While we see a painting by Constable or a Gainsborough fetching as many thousands as they once fetched hundreds, those by Linnell, as a rule, keep to the five hundred or six hundred guinea level which they had reached a quarter of a century since. Nor does modern criticism concern itself with them; but this may be due in part to the popularity of the Dutch and French romanticists, whose ideal is far removed from that of Linnell. Dr. Muther thinks that he carried on the tradition of Constable and David Cox to the new period: 'At first revelling in golden light, in sunsets and rosy clouds of dusk, and at a later time, in the manner of the pre-Raphaelite, bent on precise execution of bodily form,' but those who love Constable best would hardly be inclined to endorse the statement. Indeed, Mr. Henley has gone so far as to say that, 'well as he meant, and vigorous as was his temperament, the outcome of it all is in some sort a negation of art.'

The painting, formerly in the collection of Sir John Pender, and now in the City of Birmingham Art Gallery, is reproduced here from a photograph by Mr. J. Caswall Smith.

6. *Tending Sheep* (*Linnell*).

BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR

By W. Clarkson Stanfield, R.A.

THAT Clarkson Stanfield displayed 'an exquisite and almost fairy-like delicacy of technique, which is in its way absolutely perfect'[1] may be conceded, especially if the praise is bestowed on merely the dexterity of craftsmanship exhibited in his water-colours. 'He is the leader of English Realists,' wrote Mr. Ruskin, 'and perhaps among the most remarkable of his characteristics is the look of common-sense and rationality which his composition will always bear when exposed to any kind of affectation. . . . One work of Stanfield alone presents us with as much concentrated knowledge of sea and sky as, diluted, would have lasted any one of the old masters his life.'

In some respects 'The Castle of Ischia,' or 'The Abandoned,' would have revealed the actual sea-painting of Stanfield more fully; but 'The Battle of Trafalgar' (a sketch for which hangs in the National Gallery) is interesting by way of contrast with Turner's version of the same subject. In Stanfield's you feel that realism is supreme—not mere imitation, such as a looking-glass might have reflected at a chance moment, but a well-selected composition that is unflinching in its respect for facts, and yet by no means lacking pictorially.

The scene represents 'the centre of the fleet at half-past two o'clock, almost an hour and a half after Lord Nelson received his death-wound.' The *Victory* is in the act of disengaging herself from the *Redoutable*, a French seventy-four, at that time lashed alongside the *Témeraire*, a British ninety-eight, and at that moment the *Fougueaux*, another French seventy-four, became the prize of the latter. On the left is the *Royal Sovereign* with her prize the *Santa Anna*, both unmanageable wrecks; on the right are the *Bucentaur*, Admiral Villeneuve's ship, an eighty, and the *Santisima Trinidad*, a Spanish four-decker.

The picture, painted about 1836 for the United Service Club, is still in the club-house.

[1] Harry Quilter, *A Group of Idyllists*, 1895.

7. *Battle of Trafalgar* (*Stanfield*).

CHRIST WEEPING OVER JERUSALEM

By Sir Charles Eastlake, p.r.a.

IT would be unfair to omit an example of the work of the President of the Royal Academy from 1850 to 1855. Yet, despite its former popularity, there seems to be no class of painting less in touch with modern sympathy than the religious picture of the school of Overbeck. In Biblical subjects painted to-day the costume and accessories of the unchanging East bulk largely, and archæological accuracy seems to hold first place. In the days of this picture sentiment was supreme. That it appears merely sentimental now is partly due to the accident of time, with its inevitable change of taste. For the accomplishment which a picture of this order betrays almost justifies its presence in the National Gallery. It may be needlessly outspoken to call it a fossil, yet to do so is not unduly disrespectful. Fossils lived once; when Raphael founded this school of Biblical incident, and even when Overbeck renewed it, the schools they founded were vital if not robust. But dressing up lay-figures in nondescript robes, and posing them as heroes of Sacred Writ, finds little favour to-day. In this excellent composition its very excellence wearies In its effort to fill the space beautifully, human interest has been overlooked; and a subject which should impress a spectator fails to awaken a single emotion of awe or sympathy. The Christ has rarely been represented with less of the attributes that move men to tears or to rapture. The Apostles are neither unlettered fisher-folk, nor sages with the world's destinies in their hands. With Michael Angelo an unreal grandeur lifts them above the sphere of daily life to exalt them as demi-gods. With certain moderns the very insistence on their lowly state adds unwonted dignity to their presence in scenes that have enthralled a world. Here they are neither as gods nor as men, but abstract personages who fail to interest in any way. As an example of academic painting—irreproachable but lifeless—the picture may be praised with academic compliments. In itself it provokes neither pleasure nor contempt: it is too remote from human foibles.

This painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1841, and came to the National Gallery as part of Mr. Vernon's Collection in 1847.

8. *Christ Weeping over Jerusalem* (*Eastlake*).

MY UNCLE TOBY AND THE WIDOW WADMAN

By Charles R. Leslie, r.a.

A PICTURE which enjoys the honour of being represented by two versions in two important galleries (one in the National Gallery and one in the South Kensington Museum) is past the stage of criticism. The painting here reproduced is probably the original, No. 403 in the National Gallery being a replica painted for Mr. Vernon.

The subject, from *Tristram Shandy*, illustrates a scene between 'my Uncle Toby' and the 'Widow Wadman' in the sentry-box, an incident which occupies chapters xxiv. and xxv. of the third volume :—

'"I am half distracted, Captain Shandy," said Mrs. Wadman, holding up her cambric handkerchief to her left eye, as she approached the door of my Uncle Toby's sentry-box; "a mote,—or sand,—or something,—I know not what, has got into this left eye of mine;—do look into it:—it is not in the white."—

'In saying which, Mrs. Wadman edged herself close in beside my Uncle Toby, and squeezing herself down upon the corner of his bench, she gave him an opportunity of doing it without rising up. "Do look into it," she said.

'"I protest, madam," said my Uncle Toby, "I can see nothing whatever in your eye."

'"It is not in the white," said Mrs. Wadman.—My Uncle Toby looked with might and main into the pupil.'

The figure of Uncle Toby is believed to be a portrait of Mr. Bannister the comedian. In Leslie's works 'there is such a strong dose of realism that his pictures will always keep their value as historical documents—not for the year 1630, but for the year 1830,' says Dr. Richard Muther. But although 1832 was the date of its painting, it is difficult to regard the picture as a document of 1830. It is a deliberate attempt to re-embody the costume and spirit of a period nearly a century before. In common with all Leslie's pictures, it shows nice regard for accuracy in costume, and escapes by the chance of its subject the fatal anachronism of many pieces of *genre*, where we are confronted by the coiffure of models arranged according to the mode of the hour, while the characters themselves are robed in the style of a hundred, or even a thousand, years earlier.

The painting is in the Sheepshanks Collection at South Kensington Museum.

9. *My Uncle Toby* (*Leslie*).

AUTOLYCUS

By Charles R. Leslie, r.a.

THIS is one of the most popular of Leslie's Shakespearian subjects. It represents 'a scene in Bohemia, a road near a shepherd's cottage. Autolycus—(of whom the servant has just said, 'O master, if you did but hear the pedlar at the door, you would never dance again after a tabor and pipe; no, the bagpipe could not move you: he sings several tunes faster than you'll tell money; he utters them as he had eaten ballads and all men's ears grew to his tunes')—enters with his song, 'Lawn as white as driven snow,' and, after bantering the clown and maids, holds up one of his broadsheets and says: 'Here's another ballad, Of a fish, that appeared upon the coast, on Wednesday the fourscore of April, forty thousand fathoms above water, and sung this ballad against the hard hearts of maids; it was thought she was a woman, and was turned into a cold fish, for she would not exchange flesh with one that loved her: the ballad is very pitiful, and as true.'[1]

The 'snapper-up of unconsidered trifles' is brought into a composition of very formal design; being in short the favourite 'pyramid' which has fascinated formal painters of all schools. But it is not a coldly academic version. 'Note the skilful painting of the wares in the tray and the bright red of the cap of Autolycus, characteristic of so many of Leslie's pictures'—says one appreciative critic. The colour, however, is hardly 'fine,' using the word in a technical sense; but as a Shakespeare incident done into picture it is a distinctly pleasant example of a painter whose sprightly imagination and adequate technique may serve to secure him a certain fame perhaps a little beyond his actual deserts. There are many sorts of 'bests,' and of its particular class this painting may fairly claim to be a very praiseworthy example.

It hangs now at South Kensington (No. 115) in the Sheepshanks Gallery I.

[1] *The Winter's Tale*, Act iv. Scene 3.

10. *Autolycus* (*Leslie*)

A VILLAGE CHOIR

By Thomas Webster, R.A.

WHERE a picture tells its own story as plainly as this one tells it, it seems folly to accompany it with a description—even of its simple technique, of which the catalogue bids you 'note the variety of character and attention to details, even to the painting of the worn prayer-book and the carved oak panels.' Webster loved to depict the English urchin—not the public-school species, but the peasant-lad. Two of his best-known works, 'The Smile' and 'The Frown,' depict the effect of the moods of a village pedagogue upon a form of urchins, which Goldsmith immortalised in 'The Deserted Village.' The titles of others, 'A Dame's School,' 'The Truant,' 'A B C,' 'Going to School,' show how closely Webster kept to his favourite theme. His rustics are all imaginative, law-fearing adults and children, trained to do reverence to the squire and the parson, and to abide content 'in that station of life' to which the Catechism doomed them. As a record of the days when the church musicians supplied the nucleus of a village orchestra, this picture has a sentimental value to music-lovers, for with such raw material progress had been possible. Now, as the madrigals and glees, for which Britain was famous in Elizabethan times, are no longer indigenous, so the harmonium has killed the village chamber music. That its harmony was often to seek, Webster suggests here; but the machine-made music has banished the simpler art, even as the camera has rung the death-knell of pictures of this class.

It is true that a recent German critic calls Webster's 'rustics, children, and schoolmasters the citizens of an ideal planet'; but this is rather overstating the case. A little 'prettified' they must needs be to satisfy the taste which ruled between 1825 and 1876, the half-century that saw him a frequent exhibitor at the Academy; but they are genuine types of a sort now obsolete. 'Mr. Webster,' says Lady Eastlake, 'was a childlike worshipper of the revelations above and around him—whether seen through the telescope in his garden, or the microscope in his window. It was with the same humorous feeling that gave a charm to his art, that, coming to London once in full spring-time, he complained, with a countenance beaming with health and content, that he had been positively driven away from the country by the smell of the violets and the song of the nightingales.'

The picture here reproduced is No. 222 of the collection at South Kensington Museum.

11. *A Village Choir* (*Webster*)

THE SLEEPING BLOODHOUND

By Sir Edwin Landseer, r.a.

IT seems almost needless to add printed comment to Landseer's straightforward rendering in paint. But his fine brush-work and capable technique must not be left without a word of appreciation, even if the somewhat exaggerated humanising of his beasts makes it impossible to speak of them in the terms of praise which have become stereotyped.

That Landseer won the heart of the public is a fact beyond dispute; that he did so most honourably and with fair technical equipment may also be granted. But, all the same, the doubt will intrude whether it is really ennobling an animal to give it apparent consciousness of those motions we believe to be peculiar to humanity.

In the official catalogue of the National Gallery we find this description:— '"Countess," the hound here represented, sleeping on the top of a balustrade at Wandsworth, one Sunday evening, overbalanced herself, fell a height of twenty-three feet, and died on the same evening. On the next morning she was carried to St. John's Wood, in the hope that Sir Edwin Landseer would make a sketch of her as a reminiscence of an old favourite. "This is an opportunity not to be lost," said the painter. "Go away: come on Thursday at two o'clock." At the appointed time "The Sleeping Bloodhound" was a finished picture.' The anecdote is not without pertinence; for if 'sleep' is painted from 'death,' that fidelity to nature which the untrained critic credits to Landseer is, for once at all events, proved to be founded on slender basis.

It was exhibited at the British Institution in 1839, and bequeathed to the National Gallery by Mr. Jacob Bell in 1859. The illustration here given is from the reproduction published by the Autotype Company, London, W.C.

12. *The Sleeping Bloodhound* (*Landseer*).

THE DROVER'S DEPARTURE

By Sir Edwin Landseer, r.a.

ALTHOUGH Sir Edwin Landseer's fame was established by his pictures of stags, horses, and dogs, and will probably depend on them, yet he painted many others wherein animals play quite secondary parts. Here is one of them, and such a story as this picture has to tell is fully explained by its title, and by the artificial grouping of the figures, although these, forming the favourite 'pyramid' composition beloved of Academician painters of all schools, are more concerned with helping the pattern of the picture than with realistic truth.

Seen under the influence of present taste, there is an air of sentimentality throughout Landseer's works which is apt to blind a critic to their undoubted merits. Their sentiment is noble enough; but the 'goody-goody' tone which exhales from all his heroes, biped and quadruped, is apt to distort one's judgment.

But the enormous favour shown to Landseer in his life, and the honours lavished upon him, will compensate for the injustice (if it be injustice) of the present. It is too early to speculate on his final place in art; possibly the really good technique of his early and middle period may bring him through the ordeal, and if so, what to us appears sentimentality may seem, once more, honest sentiment to another generation. But at present, with every intention to be judicial, it is impossible not to feel a certain dislike to the patronising treatment he awarded to the whole animal kingdom in endowing it with polite manners. For it must not be forgotten that docility and good behaviour towards mankind are not the natural attributes of animals, but merely qualities evolved, after countless generations, by domesticity which is often enough only slavery under a less repellent name.

The picture is at South Kensington Museum.

13. *The Drover's Departure* (*Landseer*).

THE DYING STAG

By Sir Edwin Landseer, r.a.

PERHAPS at this moment it is more difficult to do justice to the fine qualities of Landseer's work than it will be fifty years hence. Their enormous popularity, not merely in England but throughout the Anglo-Saxon world, has naturally provoked a reaction, which in its turn doubtless will also cease to distort criticism, and leave the painter in his final place.

Landseer imparted to his animals sentimental emotions which belong more fitly to human beings, and emphasised this perversion by his titles—'Laying Down the Law,' 'Alexander and Diogenes,' 'The Shepherd's Chief Mourner,' and 'A Distinguished Member of the Humane Society.' They are distinctly fables with a moral. Yet, despite this tendency to pose his actors in little dramas, he knew his subjects intimately, and as a sportsman, was able to avoid the many pitfalls into which a studio painter is apt to fall.

It was doubtless this knowledge of the habits of horses and stags and dogs which won him the appreciation of a country of sportsmen. It is also true that to men accustomed to the open air, and out of touch with art, very obvious sentiment appeals irresistibly. Melodrama, which is often a rough and ready imitation of nature, they appreciate far more than subtle analogies which demand from the spectator some kindred study. 'Inevitable death is forcibly depicted in the head of the stag,' says the official catalogue. It is quite possible that the upturned eye of this dying animal, with its human pathos, is literally true to nature; but, notwithstanding, it is of the school of melodrama, in which nature and humanity are in accord, so that a tragedy takes place in a thunderstorm and a wedding in sunshine. This is not set down in any carping spirit, but only to indicate some of the reasons which prejudice many artists against work that gained a not undeserved popularity. The paintings of our greatest living animal-painter, Mr. J. M. Swan, would seem to us far more faithful records of real wild life; but it may be doubted if they will ever move the public so deeply as Landseer moved it. The love of sport on the one hand, and the emotional sympathy, which finds expression in the various societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, both discern in Landseer something that appeals to them peculiarly and deeply.

The picture (No. 412) in the National Gallery was exhibited in the Royal Academy of 1883, and was purchased as part of the Vernon Collection in 1847. The illustration here given is copied from the reproduction published by the Autotype Company, London, W.C.

14. *The Dying Stag* (*Landseer*).

LILIUM AURATUM

By John Frederick Lewis

THIS brilliant and minutely finished picture is always a favourite when it appears (as through the courtesy of its owner it frequently does) in various loan exhibitions. On looking up its history, the date of its production, 1871, would seem at least twenty years too late, both for its sentiment and the type of beauty it records. But when you remember that the artist, who had lived in Cairo from 1843 until 1851, was sixty years old when he painted it, the curiously old-fashioned atmosphere which pervades it is explained. The following description is taken from the official 'Guildhall' catalogue, 1890: 'This beautiful Oriental scene shows an Odalisque and her attendant in the garden of the harem. The Odalisque is dressed in a dark green jacket, richly embroidered with gold; folds of pink, lined with crimson and edged with gold, hang from her waist and trail upon the ground. Crimson drapery is round her figure and drops in a broad fold at her side. A dark crimson and green turban is gathered round her black hair. She holds a richly coloured Tchnak vase with red and white roses in it. Following her is an attendant, a young girl, evidently amused at something. Her blue turban suits her dusky complexion. Her skirt is a rich mauve embroidered with gold; over it is a light coloured garment. She, too, carries flowers. The two have come through a wilderness of lilies, poppies, pansies, and fuschia, to a doorway over which is a climbing rose with numberless blooms, beyond which tiger lilies are seen. In the background is the rest of the garden, enclosed by a low wall, with a row of orange-trees, and beyond are the blue waters of the Bosphorus. It is a gorgeous production, yet a lovely quietude pervades the scene. The minute execution is quite equal to that of the painter's smaller pictures.'

The picture was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1873, and is now in the collection of Sir Cuthbert Quilter, M.P., by whose courtesy it is here reproduced.

15. *Lilium Auratum* (*Lewis*).

SIR TRISTRAM

By William Dyce, r.a.

THE full title of this painting in fresco on the wall of the Queen's Robing-Room of the Palace of Westminster runs, 'Admission of Sir Tristram to the fellowship of the Table Round.'

The scene depicted is in the great hall of Camelot, King Arthur's palace, which is filled with knights of the Round Table and various other characters familiar to students of Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*. In other panels of the same room are three more scenes from the Arthurian legend, also painted by Dyce, who received his commission to execute them after entering into the State competition for the decoration of the new Houses of Parliament. The National Gallery contains one of his small landscapes, 'Pegwell Bay,' and also a 'St. John leading the Virgin from the Tomb.' The Scottish National Gallery has an 'Infant Hercules' and 'Francesa di Rimini,' and 'The Judgment of Solomon,' a cartoon for tapestry; but it is by his frescoes in the House of Lords, the Queen's Robing-Room, Buckingham Palace, Osborne House, and All Saints', Margaret Street, that he will be best remembered.

Dyce was a pioneer in the revival of mural decoration—a well-intentioned artist who, if he did not rise notably above the school of his friend Overbeck and the German Nazarenes, is far more worthy than many whose reputation is world-wide. To all interested in that English movement which the Arts and Crafts Society represents, Dyce stands for more than a mere reflection of German influence, for he set the fashion which still controls much mural decoration. These frescoes have their lineal descendants in Mr. E. A. Abbey's sumptuous decorations for the Boston Library; especially is this evident if your compare, through the medium of photographic reproduction, the compositions of Dyce in the 'forties' with those of Abbey in the 'nineties.' The differences are great, it is true; but the essentials are not so very far distant. That we admire Mr. Abbey's work, and are nearly unmoved by that of Dyce, may also be true; yet (although the first are by way of being genuine frescoes, and the latter paintings on canvas intended to serve as substitutes) one fancies future historians will take both as representing successive stages in the art of mural decoration, which has never become indigenous in English-speaking communities.

16. *Sir Tristram* (*Dyce*).

THE COVENANTERS' PREACHING

By Sir George Harvey, p.r.s.a.

THE official catalogue of the National Gallery of Scotland contains a note upon the series of Covenanter pictures by Sir George Harvey, wherein we find 'their popularity was great, and engravings from them carried his reputation far and wide. It could not be doubted that in them he touched a chord which vibrated thrillingly in the breasts of his countrymen, and was peculiarly felt in many a home—otherwise devoid of art—in Canada, the Cape, and wherever a Scottish man wandered and worked.' Pictures of the class to which these belong, especially in the form of engravings, do indeed enter 'many a home otherwise devoid of art'; hence their attributes in other respects need not be subjected to severe analysis. For their purpose is to preach and to record certain facts which may be outside all questions of art. That they are occasionally in every sense great pictures at the same time does not suffice to raise the whole class to which they belong to a foremost rank.

While pure *genre* may be so arranged as to yield certain arrangements in lighting, colour, or other technical aspects which belong to the higher order of paintings, in these didactic compositions many things must be included, not to help the picture as a picture, but to enforce the lesson it teaches. That it has been done so well by Harvey and others should suffice to remove the prejudice which some critics display, not without cause, towards the 'subject' picture. Nor need we limit the functions of the Fine Arts to any particular class. To appreciate technical mastery needs some technical understanding; to enjoy such work as this, for its own good qualities, augurs more real sympathy than to reserve one's sympathy for the limited number of real masterpieces.

This painting, presented by Mr. John Fleming of London, is in the Galleries of the Corporation of Glasgow, by whose permission it is here reproduced.

17. *The Covenanters' Preaching (Harvey).*

ANNE PAGE INVITING SLENDER TO DINNER

By Thomas Duncan, r.s.a. and r.a.

THE subject of this picture is taken from the *Merry Wives of Windsor* (Act i. Scene 1), when Anne Page is vainly endeavouring to induce the bashful Slender to join the others at dinner. Through the open window of a house in the streets of Windsor you see Sir John Falstaff and Justice Shallow :—

'Anne Page. Will 't please your worship to come in, sir?

Slender. No, I thank you, forsooth, heartily; I am very well.

Anne. I pray you, sir, walk in.

Slender. I had rather walk here, I thank you; I bruised my shin the other day with playing at sword and dagger with a master of fence, three veneys for a dish of stewed prunes; and, by my troth, I cannot abide the smell of hot meat since. Why do your dogs bark so? Be there bears i' the town?'

As it depicts a scene from a comedy it would be unfair to inquire too minutely into the details of the composition, which certainly follow the traditions of stage architecture rather than actual buildings. But, artificial though it be, the whole arrangement is effective. It has been said Duncan's early death at thirty-eight cut short a career that would have achieved great things, and that as a colourist he had few superiors. Bearing in mind the period of its production, in the 'forties,' it is certainly very far above the average of its contemporaries, and one of the few illustrations of Shakespeare which go near to realise the spirit of the text. The painting is No. 273 in the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh.

18. *Anne Page and Slender (T. Duncan).*

ST. PAUL'S FROM THE RIVER

By Henry Dawson

THE Port of London, despite its superb material, has attracted fewer painters than might have been expected. Nor has St. Paul's, which is in its way as imposingly placed as any building in the world, been chosen as often as it deserves. In this excellent work by Dawson we find a sober and accurate transcript of the facts the scene offers made into a picture, which is full of glamour, by reason of the atmospheric effects of sunrise the painter has conveyed so happily. It is a dream city, but also a real workaday London in the magic light of early morning—the time that inspired Wordsworth to his famous sonnet, 'Earth has not anything to show more fair.' But although the spirit of that wonderful poem may be suggested here :—

> 'The river glideth at his own sweet will;
> Dear God, the very houses seem asleep,
> And all that mighty heart is lying still.'

There are too many signs of life and activity on the shipping to convey the great silence that is felt throughout Wordsworth's stately lines.

Although conceived somewhat under the influence of Turner, both the grandiosity and the grandeur of Turner are absent. Yet, for some moods, this more sober aspect of the spot which is the very heart of the British Empire appeals no less sympathetically.

As a painting it satisfies. To treat everyday facts, without any poetic licence, so that they become poetry, is given but to few; and if Dawson be not in every sense a great painter, and has not added to the limited number of the world's masterpieces, yet he has left faithful and excellent pieces of work that are most certainly destined to receive even fuller appreciation than has been awarded hitherto.

The painting is in the Art Gallery of Birmingham, whence it has been reproduced by permission of the Corporation of that city.

19. *St. Paul's from the River* (*Dawson*).

PETER THE GREAT AT DEPTFORD DOCKYARD

By Daniel Maclise, r.a.

THIS painting by Maclise is an extremely representative example of the artificially composed groups which attracted him. Less well-known than the 'Play Scene in Hamlet' or the 'Banquet Scene in Macbeth,' it is not less typical of a style that bears about the same relation to nature as did the triumphs of the rustic landscape-gardeners a century ago.

Of its order, academic and anecdotal, it shows at its best the class of picture which at its worst brought contempt on the British school. Here is fine drawing, good study of character, and a most elaborately told story. Not an atom of its picturesque confusion but helps to support the central theme. Every adjunct and every attitude take part in enforcing the point; and yet to-day, taught actuality by photographs, so formal a method of depicting a really striking incident seems more akin to stage-grouping than to the real historical fact. That a Czar of Muscovy should work as a labourer in an English dockyard is in itself sufficiently striking to be impressive if pictured in a far simpler manner.

It was during the winter of 1697-98 that William III., with Lord Caermarthen (President of Council) and Lord Shrewsbury (Foreign Secretary), visited the Russian Czar, who, beside his companions Menzikoff, Golownin, Galatzin, and Prince Sikerski, was often accompanied by a dwarf, a negro boy, a monkey, and a young actress from Drury Lane, all duly seen in the picture.

The painting, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1857, was purchased at Mr. Henry Wood's sale in 1883 for £388, 10s. It is now at the Royal Holloway College, Egham, whence it is here reproduced by kind permission of the Governors.

20. *Peter the Great at Deptford Dockyard* (*Maclise*).

DREDGING OFF THE MERSEY

By William J. Muller

THIS painting, which was added to the National Gallery so lately as 1896, is an excellent example of Muller's more direct manner in rapid transcripts from nature. 'He was one of the most dexterous among the dexterous; beside Turner, the greatest adept of English painting'—says a German critic; yet the name of Muller can be hardly called a household word in British art.

His Southern and Eastern pictures are perhaps the most typical of the man, although in some of these there is trace of an artificial grandiose manner, which gives them a slightly old-fashioned air. But when he paints without any suspicion of melodrama, he is undeniably great.

Among the most important of his landscapes are 'Tivoli,' 'The Avenue of Sphinxes at Luxor,' 'The River Lledr, North Wales,' 'A Norfolk Dyke in Winter,' and 'Caernarvon Castle, Early Morning.' Of figure subjects his 'Chess Players' is the most celebrated. This was originally purchased for £25, and was sold the last time for £4000—a fact which shows the rapid advance of Muller's work in the estimation of collectors. Yet, although he was without Academic honours, and at times scurvily treated by the Hanging Committee at Burlington House, he cannot be said to have been unappreciated during his life.

In the 'Money Changers,' 'Prayers in the Desert,' 'A Street Scene in Cairo,' and other Eastern subjects, we have evidence of his accurate observation and keen appreciation of the aspects of light and colour in the Orient no less than in his native land. 'The climate is much against one, the sunshine intense, the shadow cold. One gets black in the former, in the latter ague. How much one artist goes through to acquire what people at a conversazione go through in five minutes! Did it ever strike you in that light?' is a passage from one of his letters, that betrays the attitude of Muller to his art and to the public.

A special exhibition of his work, gathered together at Birmingham in 1896, revealed the painter in all his moods, and showed him besides in the less familiar aspect of a draughtsman, whose pencil sketches in themselves were sufficient to have established a reputation.

The illustration is from the reproduction published by the Autotype Company. The picture was moved in August 1897 to the new Tate Gallery at Millbank.

21. *Dredging off the Mersey* (*Muller*).

DOCTOR JOHNSON

AWAITING AN AUDIENCE IN THE ANTE-CHAMBER OF LORD CHESTERFIELD

By Edward M. Ward, r.a.

THE incident which is here depicted will be found in the *Life of Dr. Johnson* (section dated 1754), and Boswell's own words may be quoted to explain it :—

'. . . The world has been for many years amused with a story confidently told, and as confidently repeated with additional circumstances, that a sudden disgust was taken by Johnson upon occasion of his having been one day kept long in waiting in his Lordship's antechamber, for which the reason assigned was, that he had company with him; and that at last, when the door opened, out walked Collie Cibber; and that Johnson was so violently provoked when he found for whom he had been so long excluded, that he went away in a passion, and never would return. I remember having mentioned this to George, Lord Lyttelton, who told me he was very intimate with Lord Chesterfield; and holding it as a well-known truth, defended Lord Chesterfield by saying that "Cibber, who had been introduced familiarly by the backstairs, had probably not been there above ten minutes." It may seem strange even to entertain a doubt concerning a story so long and so widely current, and thus implicitly adopted, if not sanctioned by the authority which I have mentioned; but Johnson himself assured me that there was not the least foundation for it. . . .'

In face of the above statement, it might seem curious to find that that incident has been made into a picture; but another passage from Boswell's *Johnson*, quoted in the National Gallery catalogue—'Seven years, my Lord, have now passed since I waited in your outward rooms'—gives colour to the fact, even if the story of Dr. Johnson being violently provoked thereby is not well founded.

The dramatic possibilities were just those which suited the painter's manner, and, as an example of the illustrated anecdote, it occupies a worthy place in British art.

The original is now in the new Tate Gallery at Millbank, and formed part of the Vernon Collection, bequeathed to the National Gallery in 1847.

22. *Dr. Johnson in the Ante-chamber of Lord Chesterfield* (*Ward*).

THE SOUTH-SEA BUBBLE

A SCENE IN CHANGE ALLEY IN 1720

By Edward M. Ward, r.a.

LITERATURE in the flat—is the happy epigram which a notable wit coined to denote a certain class of 'paintings with a purpose' —not confined to England, it is true, but at one time monopolising nearly all the attention the British public expended upon art.

In this painter's version of a famous national craze, the pleasure the canvas affords a spectator almost entirely depends on his knowledge of the scene depicted: otherwise the tables in the open air, where business is being transacted, and the evident excitement which prevails among all the actors, would convey nothing.

Without a title, no human being, unless possibly he were a writer of analytical musical programmes, could provide an interpretation. But if the story of the great Stock Exchange speculation is tolerably familiar, then as you hunt over the picture and comprehend bit by bit its medley of incidents, you can understand what it all means, and at the same time admit that the pictorial annotation of the text—for it is little more—has been achieved with considerable dexterity. In the official catalogue three separate extracts in prose and rhyme accompany its title. Should a picture need not merely a long label but a string of quotations to elucidate its meaning? This is a question that need not be answered here. But in a popular record of British art the reason for the half-contemptuous attitude of many critics towards work of this order—not, however, specially to this picture—is best indicated.

To recognise such a prejudice is not to attack the 'South-Sea Bubble,' which is an exceedingly good example of its school, nor to attack even the school. Many people many tastes. Thousands who feel no thrill of pleasure before a painter's masterpiece can enjoy honestly the pictured incident which embodies the anecdote that arouses their interest. Only, the two classes should not be confused. It is true that the line between them is not sharply drawn, any more than between verse and poetry, true literature or journalistic effort; but the extremes of each are wide apart assuredly, and without debasing the one to exalt the other, it is well to recognise that they are not sufficiently inspired by the same intention to be set in competition.

The painting, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1847, formed part of the Vernon Collection bequeathed to the National Gallery in 1874. It is now in the Tate Gallery at Millbank.

23. *The South-Sea Bubble (Wara*

LA LOTERIA NAÇIONAL

By John Phillip, R.A.

FROM the year 1851, when John Phillip paid his first visit to Seville, his devotion to Iberian subjects won him the nickname of 'Philip of Spain.' The picture here reproduced, painted in 1862, is an excellent example of his second manner. The theme is obviously taken from some incident he had witnessed in a crowd waiting eagerly for the declaration of winning numbers in a State lottery. It shows his success in the delineation of character, his admirable way of telling a story, and his rich colour; yet it is not quite easy to discover in his work 'something of the strength of Velasquez united to a more Venetian splendour of colour,' which, according to a recent critic, reveals him as 'a painter in the full sense of the word with whom the future will have to reckon.'

But if such eulogy be a trifle overstrained, yet the man who, after an academic period marked by success, was able to cast aside the petty traditions of British *genre* in the fifties, and to set about rivalling the great Spanish masters in their own chosen field, commands more than perfunctory respect.

He certainly did not catch the spirit of Velasquez so nearly as certain living painters have caught it, but, on the other hand, he escaped the production of merely clever travesties of Velasquez with which others have made us familiar. Throughout he remains true to his sturdy Scots temperament in spite of yielding to the fascination of the sunny south. If his place in art is slightly lower by reason of this reservation, yet he occupies an honourable and assured position among British master painters.

The 'Loteria Naçional,' at one time in the Manley Hall Gallery, was (as one of the items of Baron Grant's collection) sold at Christie's in 1877 for three thousand guineas. It belongs now to Mr. Holbrook Gaskell, by whose kind permission it is here reproduced.

24 *La Escuela Nacional (Edificio)*

CARDINAL WOLSEY'S PROCESSION

By Sir John Gilbert, r.a.

THIS work, even in monochrome reproduction, suggests the splendour of its colour—especially its scheme of brilliant reds—as seen here in the robes of the Cardinal and the cassocks of the acolytes. The historical subjects which chiefly attracted Gilbert are singularly unlike the rigidly pedantic studies of posed models, faultlessly accurate in costume, and mildly dramatic in their grouping, which form the bulk of our British efforts in this class of paintings. So that the veteran's work appears to be a rapidly transcribed impression of the scene as he pictured it in his mind. Facial expression and elaborately minute detail were set aside for a broader truth, and if his paintings are not among the consummate masterpieces of art, they are worthy a very near place. For they are full of life and of colour; they suggest mural decorations on a large scale—a shade rococo, and not wholly unrelated to Rubens. That he was a great colourist, in the sense artists understand the phrase, is perhaps more than a candid admirer would claim. But his very faults are almost virtues in disguise; for he never lost the breadth of his composition by niggling detail. Thus he was unconcerned with the subtleties of texture, or of *nuances* of 'tone' and 'value'; nor did he trouble himself with atmospheric effects. At times he lacked restraint, and narrowly escaped vulgarity, and yet the splendid vigour of his fertile imagination—whether studied in the thousands of designs for wood-engravings or in the large number of canvases he painted—rarely flags, and never wholly fails to satisfy. Among giants he is no dwarf, and among the average timid work of many contemporaries his stands out virile, a proof of courageous effort that feared no theme, however complex. He is modelled on no predecessor and leaves no followers. It may be that he was essentially an illustrator, and that his paintings are in a sense only coloured drawings; but even if this be so, he bulks largely in nineteenth-century art as a prodigious worker whose imagination was rarely at fault, if at times his technique appears hasty.

The picture (in water-colour, 36 × 40 ins.) belongs to the Corporation of London, by whose permission it is here reproduced

25. *Cardinal Wolsey's Procession* (*Gilbert*).

PAOLO AND FRANCESCA

By George F. Watts, R.A.

THE tragic history of the two ill-fated lovers was, as we know, not invented by Dante, but embodies a real incident that happened during his lifetime. Twice he alludes to it in the *Divine Comedy*, and Mr. Watts has doubtless chosen the subject which he has treated so nobly from Canto v. of the *Inferno*—the passage that in Cary's translation begins, 'One day for our delight we read of Lancelot,'—but the sestet of the sonnet by John Keats was doubtless also in the painter's mind—

'. . . To that second circle of sad hell
Where, 'mid the gust, the whirlwind, and the flaw
Of rain and hailstones, lovers need not tell
Their sorrows. Pale were the sweet lips I saw,
Pale were the lips I kissed, and fair the form
I floated with about that melancholy storm.'

Lest the story as Dante tells it, as Keats recalls it in the above sonnet, or as Leigh Hunt amplified it in *The Story of Rimini*, be unfamiliar to any, it may be well to repeat it baldly. Francesca was the wife of the deformed Lanciotto, son of the Duke of Rimini, who, lighting upon her in guilty converse with his brother Paolo, slew both. Dante and Virgil encountered them in the second circle of hell, where carnal sinners are swept along by furious winds in utter darkness. For a moment they appear, and Dante swoons with the horror of the story as Francesca tells it him. It is said that he wrote this Canto of the *Inferno*, to which reference has been made, in the very house wherein Francesca had been born.

The picture (here reproduced from a photograph by Mr. J. Caswall Smith), painted by Mr. Watts in 1879, is not among those now at the Tate Gallery, given by the artist to the nation.

26. *Paolo and Francesca* (*Watts*).

LOVE AND DEATH

By George F. Watts, R.A.

IF one were forced to select a single picture only as *the* typical Victorian painting, this might well be chosen. As Tennyson's *In Memoriam* embodies the sober thought of its period, so this embodies the sober sentiment. The principal forces which govern humanity are typified simply—Love, in the old form of a boy-Cupid; Death, in the less familiar aspect of the great mother. It is impossible to overlook the singular analogy between this and the Elegiac Ode of Walt Whitman—

> 'Come, lovely and soothing death,
> Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving
> In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
> Sooner or later, delicate death,
> . . . . . .
> Dark mother, always gliding near with soft feet.'

But the parallel must not be pushed too far. Mr. Watts's theme is the impotence of Love to stay the entry of the 'dark mother.' The beloved within the house may be at one with Whitman in welcoming her arrival; but to Love it is the old enemy who approaches—the all-powerful destroyer of the closest human ties. Even from this aspect Death is not figured as a grisly skeleton, a semi-grotesque King of Terrors, but as a veiled, silent figure, slow-pacing and irresistible, whom Love in vain strives to arrest. The rose petals fall from the branches, Love's hand is wounded with their thorns, and yet a sense of peace rather than of destruction is conveyed.

Pictures that preach openly have fallen into contempt, chiefly because the morals they strive to enforce could often be put into words with a far more powerful effect. Here is one of the few modern instances of a great idea expressed as simply as it might be in a verse of the Psalms. No theological doctrines are championed or opposed; Love is not the pagan deity, but the human passion typified; Death is neither the angel-messenger nor the jailer who leads the criminal to his doom, but the mother ready to take the tired mortal to her heart. Stripped of all supernatural accessories, the arrival of Death is no less abnormal than was Birth. The 'watch and a vision between a sleep and a sleep' is over; and Love cannot work a miracle to ward off the inevitable. It sounds trite enough put in words; but, as Mr. Watts has pictured it, it offers to a thousand people new aspects of its central truth so clearly that not one of the thousand could mistake its lesson.

One version of the picture (here reproduced from a photograph by Mr. F. Hollyer) is in the Tate Gallery, Millbank.

27. *Love and Death* (*Watts*).

THE EVENING HYMN

By George Mason, A.R.A.

THE greater popularity of Fred Walker seems to have overshadowed that of Mason. Both sought to inspire transcripts of pastoral English life with the qualities of Greek art. Both were content to lose some of the realisation of the British peasant, in an effort to inspire his pose with the subtle grace of a Southerner. Both had qualities distinctly great. But Mason is not a mere echo of Walker. Without invidious comparison one may believe that he possessed a far more complete mastery of composition, although he rarely chose 'subjects' such as this, and was satisfied with one or two figures well placed out of doors, but not representing any definite incident of pathos or humour.

His figures accord marvellously with the landscape, and owe nothing to any country outside England. It has been well said that the classical grace he imparted to their movement is 'little more than the movement which springs from a healthy body.' Any one who studies 'navvies' at work, or of peasant lads and lasses at play, must be struck constantly with the marvellously 'classic' attitudes they adopt. It is the conventions of society which impart a certain stiffness, and the peasant who is clumsy in a town seems full of natural grace when engaged in his normal pastoral occupations.

Mason's colour is rich and satisfying; he beautifies—perhaps a shade more than critical taste at present is willing to endorse—all he touches. But he does so with no affectation, and imparts a sense of childish innocence and adult vigour to his figures, which is at once wholesome and graceful, and at most only an exaggeration of truth.

'The Evening Hymn' is owned by the Hon. Percy Wyndham, by whose courtesy this reproduction appears. It has been taken from the engraving of the picture published by Messrs. Colnaghi and Co., Pall Mall, London.

28. *The Evening Hymn* (*Mason*).

THE RAILWAY STATION

By William P. Frith, R.A.

WITH a painting that tells its story so elaborately as this, it seems scarcely needful to repeat it in words. The scene is the Paddington Terminus of the Great Western Railway just as a train is starting. A father packing his boys off to school, detectives seizing an absconding criminal, a newly married couple off for their honeymoon, a soldier wishing his sweetheart good-bye, and a dozen other domestic and social incidents, are depicted in a panorama full of independent groups of figures handled with no little dexterity of its sort. When Mr. Frith painted this, it was considered a bold thing to choose so unpoetic a background as a railway station. Fortunately, that attitude has long since been abandoned by critics. Yet it must not be inferred that the 'Railway Station' conforms to modern ideas of a picture. It holds somewhat the same position to serious painting as a sensational play at Drury Lane holds to Shakespearian drama. That all possible incidents of a railway station should be happening simultaneously within a painter's vision (even if his vision be panoramic, as in this case) lands us in the domain of melodrama.

Melodrama is viewed with suspicion to-day: we prefer to accept Ibsen's theory that 'things don't happen so in real life.' Yet any newspaper shows that almost every incident on which melodrama is founded may confront any one of us, at any moment. This 'Railway Station' has not a single impossible incident in its crowd; but the sum-total of the whole probably never took place at the same time, certainly not with just the required proportion of onlookers—no more, no less, that sufficed to point each moral. It is this which would place the canvas in a secondary rank, even if its actual painting and general handling were greater than they are. But, all the same, the school it represents hardly deserves the scorn which has been lavished upon it. Homely moralising in paint has a right to exist, but to set it in competition with real masterpieces would be merely absurd; for it is clearly not in any way related to the problems which are solved by a great painter. It belongs to a class which recorded a period, as a critic has said, 'when people were mostly good and innocent and happy, had no income-taxes and no vices and worries, and all went to heaven and felt in good spirits'—in other words, of a time that never was or will be.

The picture is in the Royal Holloway College at Egham, and is here reproduced by permission of Mr. Henry Graves, Pall Mall, East.

29. *The Railway Station (Frith).*

THE RECONCILIATION OF OBERON AND TITANIA

By Sir Noel Paton, R.S.A., LL.D.

THE work of Sir Noel Paton, Her Majesty's Limner for Scotland, separates itself into two distinct classes. The best known of these is devoted to sacred subjects treated with great reverence, but also with a certain sentimentality, showing that Raphael and Overbeck have in turn influenced the artist. In another domain, the land of fairies, he is himself—the Mendelssohn of painting—and, like the composer of the overture to the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, has found in Shakespeare's play the source of his most delightful inspirations.

The passage illustrated occurs in the first scene of the fourth act:—

'Titania. My Oberon! what visions have I seen!
Methought I was enamoured of an ass.
Oberon. There lies your love.
Titania. How came these things to pass?
O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!
Oberon. Silence a while.—Robin, take off this head—
Titania, music call; and strike more dead
Than common sleep, of all these five the sense.
Titania. Music, ho! music; such as charmeth sleep.
Puck. When thou wak'st, with thine own fool's eyes peep.'

It is not essential to estimate the value of work of this order, which expends itself on attempts to materialise dreams already painted by the sister art of poetry: but of its kind, Sir Noel Paton's fairy studies may rank with the most successful efforts of illustration. For such pictures, no matter how well painted, are essentially illustrations to the printed text—inspired by it, and limited to a certain extent by the author's imagination. Certainly no creator of the good little people has managed to preserve their dainty attributes more gracefully than Sir Noel Paton: whether they are the fairies of Shakespeare or the fairies of folklore is another matter. To many of us they seem true enough.

The 'Quarrel of Oberon and Titania' is the subject of a large canvas in the National Gallery of Scotland, where is also this, its companion, which obtained one of the Government premiums at the Westminster Hall competition of 1847, and was painted in 1846.

30. *The Reconciliation of Oberon and Titania* (*Noel Paton*).

WORK

By Ford Madox-Brown

AS the painter's own description of this picture is extant, it would be impertinent to offer another; but, as his analysis would fill twelve of these pages, only the salient points can be included in a digest therefrom.

The picture was begun in 1852 at Hampstead, and represents the main street of that suburb not far from the Heath. The various aspects of useful work undertaken by those who have been taught early are shown in the typical figures of the 'navvy' and of the brain-workers, Thomas Carlyle and Frederick Denison Maurice, who are seen standing to the right of the picture. Contrasted with these is the pariah who has never been taught to work, and the rich who have no need to labour, accompanied by the pastrycook's tray—a symbol of superfluity,—behind which are two ladies distributing tracts. At the back are other typical examples of both workers and non-workers. The 'gentleman on horseback' is the artist Martineau; the 'beauteous tripping dame with bell-like skirts' is Mrs. Madox-Brown; the 'philosophical baby' Arthur Gabriel Brown. The effect of hot July light was chosen because 'it seemed peculiarly fitted to display work in all its severity.'

The colour of the picture is peculiarly vivid. 'Not colourist's colour—at least, as I understand the words' (writes Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer, the grandson and the biographer of the painter); 'it is wanting in harmoniousness—disturbing, and what not. One might almost say that both pictures—"Work" and "The Last of England"—had been painted with the newly discovered aniline dyes.' . . . In its own way 'Work' is a masterpiece as an exposition of a sort of Carlylean energy and exuberance. And so, perhaps, it is the very nature of the work to be wanting in repose—rather *voyant* and disagreeable.

The painting (begun in 1852, recommenced in 1856, and finished in 1868) belongs to the Corporation of Manchester, by whose kind permission it is reproduced.

31. *Work* (*Madox-Brown*)

JOHN DALTON COLLECTING MARSH GAS

By Ford Madox-Brown

THIS painting is the twelfth and last of the interesting series in fresco which adorns the Manchester Town Hall, and as it conquers the problem of using comparatively modern costume decoratively in a way that shall harmonise with the whole of the rest, chosen from all sorts of periods, it is of peculiar artistic interest.

The incident shows John Dalton, the inventor of the Atomic Theory, collecting marsh gas by stirring up the mud of a stagnant pond, while a boy catches the rising bubbles in a wide-mouthed bottle. The clever arrangement of this picture, and its daring composition, are apparent even in black and white. Considered solely as the realisation of an anecdote told pictorially, it is also remarkably successful. One has but to remember how exceedingly difficult it must have been to suggest in a picture, however vaguely, 'John Dalton discovering the Atomic Theory,' to own that Madox-Brown, by selecting a typical incident in Dalton's investigations of certain remarkable phases of matter, has well-nigh accomplished the impossible.

Although it is not possible here to describe the series of fresco paintings which occupied so large a part of the artist's life, yet a bare list of the titles may show how large a field they attempted to cover. The Manchester Town Hall contains 'The Baptism of Edwin,' 'The Romans building Manchester,' 'Expulsion of the Danes from Manchester,' 'Philippa visiting her Flemish Weavers,' 'Crabtree watching the Transit of Venus,' 'The Proclamation regarding Weights and Measures,' 'Chetham's Life Dream,' 'First Blood of the Civil War,' 'Bridgewater Canal,' 'John Kay saved from the Rioters,' 'Wickliffe on his Trial,' and 'John Dalton.' That the artist lived long enough to complete his task is for our gain; but one could have wished that the pre-Raphaelite before pre-Raphaelites, the first artist to design furniture, and one who attempted to start an 'Arts and Crafts' half a century ago, had received in his lifetime fuller recognition.

The illustration here given is from the reproduction by the Autotype Company, London, W.C.

32. *John Dalton collecting Marsh Gas* (*Madox-Brown*).

THE MESSENGER OF EVIL TIDINGS

By Sir William Fettes Douglas, p.r.s.a.

THIS painting is a most excellent example of its class. It does not appear to be intended to represent any particular historical incident; but that the story it has to tell is clearly explained, even in the absence of a title, is evident from a glance at the reproduction here given.

That the messenger has brought extremely unpleasant news is plain enough, and from the excited attitude of the men at the open door one may imagine that it involves a call to arms. Yet if the matter in question proved to be only one for fighting in law-courts, and not involving ordeal by battle, it would scarcely affect the interest of the scene presented. The arrested movement of the figures reflects admirably the suspense which is the central motive of the picture. As a decorative composition, the comparative simplicity of the accessories imparts dignity to the whole work. The dramatic moment gains in intensity by a glimpse, through a long passage, of a distant group of people as yet apparently unaware of the evil news which has been brought.

The picture is No. 91 in the National Gallery of Scotland.

33. *The Messenger of Evil Tidings (Douglas).*

VALENTINE RESCUING SYLVIA

(*TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA*)

By W. Holman Hunt

WHEREVER this painting may be hung, amid other contemporary works, its amazing freshness is the first and the last impression it produces. Many of the latest problems of the French *vibriste* manner are here faced and conquered. Despite certain details, notably in the fashion of the hair of its men and women, marking the date of production, the treatment does not suggest 1851 any more than 1901. At the time it was first shown, Mr. Ruskin, one of the few critics who praised it at first, wrote: 'There is not a single study of drapery in the whole Academy, be it in large or small works, which, for perfect truth, power, and finish, could be compared with the black sleeve of Julia and the velvet on the breast, and the chain mail of Valentine.' Elsewhere, again referring to it, he says: 'Examination of this picture has even raised the estimate I had previously formed of its marvellous truth in detail and splendour in colour.' Heedless of the storm of ridicule and abuse the picture had provoked in London, it is pleasant to find that the Academy of Liverpool awarded it a prize of £50.

The incident depicted is from the third scene of the fifth act of the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*; the moment when Valentine rescues Sylvia from Proteus. Valentine and Sylvia (painted from Miss Siddall, afterwards the wife of Dante Gabriel Rossetti) are in the centre, Proteus to the right, and Julia to the left, while at the back you see the outlaws, with the Duke of Milan (father to Sylvia) and Thurio (a foolish rival to Valentine).

Its colour scheme is extremely vivid, so that, although by general consent it ranks among the masterpieces of British painting, it has not been, and possibly never will be, a favourite with many critics. It deserves to be studied as a genuine example of the original pre-Raphaelite ideal, which, it must never be forgotten, was *not* a matter of choice of subject, but of realistic fidelity to nature. Not fidelity in the larger and perhaps truer sense of a picture regarded as a whole, but to a series of facts minutely observed and accurately catalogued, which need long inspection to do them justice, and provoke the eye to examine the work as if it were a problem to solve, rather than as a scene to be gazed at from a fixed distance, with a sense of pleasure in a complete realisation of an incident where nature and humanity have been cunningly detained on canvas for the delight of centuries.

The picture belongs to the Corporation of Birmingham, by whose permission it is here reproduced.

34. *Valentine Rescuing Sylvia (Holman Hunt).*

THE FINDING OF THE SAVIOUR IN THE TEMPLE

By W. Holman Hunt

THIS painting, begun at Jerusalem in 1854, was not completed until 1860. Its colour, like that of the 'Light of the World,' is brilliant to a degree that is actually offensive to many people. Dean Farrar considers that 'No mediæval painter, not even Da Vinci or Luini, or Botticelli, or Raphael, ever painted so fine a representation of the boy Christ, or produced any rendering of this favourite subject at all so thorough and so perfect as this.'

Of it the author of *John Halifax* wrote a eulogistic poem, 'Then this is *Thou!* . . .' in which the following lines occur:—

'O infinitely human, yet Divine,
Half clinging, childlike, to the mother found,
Yet half repelling, as the soft eyes say—
How is it that ye sought Me?'

That Mr. Holman Hunt has attracted a huge, and perhaps not always discriminative, audience of admirers, by the sentiment he has wrought into his work, must not blind one to the fact that other qualities it possesses stamp him as a master; even the colouring, which is obnoxious to a certain school of painters, seems a triumph of technique to others no less well-informed. He is the consistent exponent of the pre-Raphaelite ideal, as first expounded. He seems not to care whether he charms or repels, but to be intent on carrying out his self-set ideal at any cost of time or thought.

No painter of his eminence is more likely to be dealt with unjustly. Adulation and censure, both far beyond their right proportions, have been showered upon him. One fact, however, is certain—that 'The Hireling Shepherd,' 'The Scape-Goat,' 'The Wandering Sheep,' 'The Awakening Conscience,' 'The Triumph of the Innocents,' and the picture already mentioned, must needs remain as typical monuments of mid-Victorian art. Strongly personal, and with an almost brutal force that insists on its own standpoint—even if you fail to love them, you must needs respect them and the painter who has so consistently maintained an ideal out of touch with the majority of taste, lay or professional, to-day.

The picture is reproduced from a photograph by Mr. J. Caswall Smith, and was lent by Messrs. Agnew and Sons to the Guildhall Exhibition, 1894.

35. *The Saviour in the Temple* (*Holman Hunt*).

DANTE'S DREAM

By Dante Gabriel Rossetti

THIS subject, taken from the 'Vita Nuova,' shows Dante guided by the Pilgrim Love into a poppy-strewn alcove, where on her bier lies the dead Beatrice. Love is stooping to kiss her; angel-figures hold a sort of baldachin above her prostrate form; in the background are glimpses of Florence.

This painting, of which—like many other of Rossetti's works—two separate versions exist, is one of the most typical of his later manner. Painted in 1870, it differs in many respects from his water-colour of 1855. In Mr. William Sharp's monograph upon the artist he quotes a passage from a letter by Sir Noel Paton:—

'I was so dumfoundered by the beauty of this great picture of Rossetti's called "Dante's Dream," that I was unable to give any expression to the emotions it excited, emotions such as I do not think any other picture, except the "Madonna di San Sisto" [Raphael] at Dresden ever stirred within me. The meaning of such a picture is like the memory of sublime and perfect music; it makes any one who fully feels it silent. Forty years hence it will be named among the half-dozen supreme pictures of the world.'

The extract may be a hasty and ultra-enthusiastic comment; but even from an impartial standpoint we can appreciate the fine qualities of the work which provoked the generous eulogy, if compelled to admit, at the same time, that technically it lacks at least some of the qualities which go to secure immortality.

Yet, with all deductions, it is a noble work of its class—perhaps the most capable that the peculiarly English School which Rossetti founded has yet produced. For it is undeniable that the Briton is curiously moved by a poetic sentiment, both Biblical and secular, and whether in Bunyan, Blake, Rossetti, or a score of others, is willing to accept superb intention, devoted to a parable or a legend, more readily than magnificent fulfilment achieved with subjects that owe nothing to literary association. The absolute masterpiece of ordered simplicity requires ripe knowledge to appreciate it; whereas the noble effort that is based on literary sentiment, if it be halting, is sure of loyal sympathy both from those who appreciate only a thousandth part of its meaning, and those who are able to supply all the painter failed to embody.

Another version, on a smaller scale, with a *predella* (painted in 1880), fetched 1000 guineas at the sale of the Graham Collection in 1886.

The version reproduced is in the Walker Gallery, Liverpool.

36. *Dante's Dream (Rossetti).*

(By Permission of the Corporation of Liverpool.)

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

By Dante Gabriel Rossetti

(*Frontispiece*)

THIS picture, although inspired by the poem Rossetti wrote at the age of twenty-one, and published in the second number of the now famous magazine, *The Germ* (February 1856), appears not to have struck its author as a suitable theme for a painting until long afterwards. It was 'in his mind to paint "The Blessed Damozel"' in 1873, we are told; but not until Mr. Graham suggested it and promised to buy the picture does he appear to have considered the idea seriously. 'The Blessed Damozel' here reproduced is not the one commissioned by Mr. Graham and finished about 1876, but another undertaken in 1879 for Mr. Leyland. The first version is most prized by staunch admirers of Rossetti; but the second has found greater favour in the eyes of the public. This latter was altered in many respects, especially in the omission of pairs of lovers clad in deep blue, who in the first version are seen embracing each other in the alleys of a yew-clipped garden behind the central figure.

To re-tell its story in a curt summary would be sacrilegious; even at the risk of repeating lines familiar as household words, a few quotations from the poem will serve our purpose far better:—

The blessed Damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of Heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of water stilled at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
For service meetly worn;
Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

Herseemed she scarce had been a day
One of God's choristers;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers;
Albeit, to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.

. . . . .

It was the rampart of God's house
That she was standing on;
By God built over the sheer depth
The which is Space begun;
So high, that looking downward thence
She scarce could see the sun.

. . . . .

And still she bowed herself and stooped
Out of the circling charm;
Until her bosom must have made
The bar she leaned on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
Along her bended arm.

. . . . .

'I wish that he were come to me,
For he will come,' she said.
'Have I not prayed in Heaven?—on earth,
Lord, Lord, has he not pray'd?
Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
And shall I feel afraid?'

. . . . .

Both versions have also a *predella* (a small picture inserted in the same frame below), showing the lover prostrate upon the grass.

The picture here illustrated was sold, as part of the Leyland Collection, at Christie's, on May 28, 1892, for 980 guineas.

ISABELLA

By Sir John E. Millais, p.r.a.

THIS picture, painted in 1849, when Millais was barely twenty, occupies a unique position in British art. For it is the first important picture signed with the initials of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (P. R. B.) which was shown in the Royal Academy. Critics with almost one accord attacked the Pre-Raphaelites and their works, including, of course, 'Isabella.' With the exception of Mr. Ruskin, scarce one voice of importance was raised in defence. Keats's poem, as we know, supplied the theme which Millais, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and Holman Hunt, three of the original Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, each decided to paint. Millais's version we see here, Rossetti's was abandoned, and Holman Hunt's was not finished until 1867. Millais, following his own bent of mind, chose a scene which foreshadows the impending tragedy in place of one of the more dramatic moments which the story offers. The two lines,

> 'They could not sit at meals but feel how well
> It soothed each to be the other by,'

must be read with the whole poem before a spectator unfamiliar with the legend could interpret rightly the subject. Every one knows the tale of the cruel brothers —who secretly murdered Lorenzo, their clerk and also their sister's lover, and how she, with the help of her old nurse, exhumed his body and cut off the head and bore it away, hiding it in a pot of basil, until that in turn was taken from her. Or if it be unfamiliar to any one, it is needless to recapitulate it in detail, remembering that the poem itself is so readily accessible.

The opportunity for depicting Italian costumes of a fine period, and of planning a group with no reference to the hitherto accepted canons of pictorial composition, gave Millais his chance to produce the work which Mr. Holman Hunt has called 'the most wonderful picture that any youth under twenty years of age ever did in the world.' Most of the characters therein are portraits. Lorenzo was painted from Mr. W. M. Rossetti; the man drinking, from Dante Gabriel Rossetti; and the man with a napkin, from W. Bell Scott. The prominent incident of the foreground, one of the brothers kicking a hound, is not in Keats's poem, nor is it to be found in the fifth novel of the Fourth Day of *The Decameron* of Boccaccio, whence the original story is taken.

It was sold in 1849 for £100, and bought in 1883 by the Corporation of Liverpool for £1120, a sum which in no way represents its probable market value to-day. The picture (sometimes called 'Lorenzo and Isabella') is at present hung in the Walker Art Gallery.

38. *Isabella* (*Millais*).

(*By Permission of the Corporation of Liverpool*)

CHILL OCTOBER

By Sir John E. Millais, p.r.a.

IN 1871, when Sir John Millais showed his first great landscape, 'Chill October,' it was received not merely with an outburst of popular appreciation, but with amazement. That a figure-painter should attempt pure landscape would have been held unseemly at that period, had not his instantaneous success justified the new departure. For in 1871 the idea was maintained very strongly that a man should be a specialist, and not try to express himself in different branches of art. 'If it is different, people say that he had better have kept to his old style, for there is a profound belief in common minds, as Sir Walter Scott has observed, that no man can do two different kinds of things equally well.'[1] In 1871 the public imagined that pictures of people and paintings of landscape each required their specialist, but now all sane folks believe that a painter has no limit imposed on his choice of subject, save that of his own will. Perhaps the influence of 'Chill October' did no little to alter popular opinion in this matter.

The scene is on the Tay, near Perth; and in face of the peculiarly successful reproduction which is here given (by permission of its owner, Lord Armstrong), it would be folly to describe the composition. Like all Millais's landscapes, it is painted with the minute attention to detail that he learned in his pre-Raphaelite days. But in this landscape the breadth does not suffer by over-elaboration of each item of the foreground; of some other later works by the same artist so much could not be said truthfully. What can be urged against Millais's landscapes the curious may discover in Mr. Ruskin's *Notes to the R.A.*, 1875, where occurs the fiercest passage—even in the storm-laden air of art criticism—provoked by 'The Deserted Garden.' Except that the title 'Chill October' has a poetic ring suggesting remotely the autumn of life, the picture is free from any taint of that sentimentality which so often vulgarises subjects entitled, 'At eventide there shall be light.' Millais—a giant in black and white, and a great master in portraits and in *genre*—proves that he was once, at least, a capable landscape-painter—one who felt the exquisite beauty of his subject. Here the handling is free, and the work enjoyable as a whole; yet one has but to recall the texture of a Constable or the colour of some of the Barbizon painters to feel that even this could hardly be called 'a painter's picture,' great though it be of its kind.

[1] Sir Arthur Helps, *Brevia; Short Essays and Aphorisms* (Bell, 1871).

39. *Chill October* (*Millais*).

THE BLIND GIRL

By Sir John E. Millais, p.r.a.

THIS important example of Millais's pre-Raphaelite manner was painted in 1856, and gained a prize at the Liverpool Academy. Mr. Ruskin's description, which is quoted in the Birmingham catalogue, is so complete that no paraphrase should be substituted :—

'The background is an open English common [Icklesham, near Winchelsea], skirted by the tidy houses of a well-to-do village in the cockney rural districts. I have no doubt the scene is a real one within some twenty miles from London, and painted mostly on the spot. A pretty little church has its window traceries freshly whitewashed by order of the careful warden. The common is a fairly spacious bit of ragged pasture, and at the side of the public road passing over it the blind girl has sat down to rest awhile. She is a simple beggar, not a poetical or vicious one; a girl of eighteen or twenty, extremely plain-featured, but healthy, and just now resting, not because she is much tired, but because the sun has but this moment come out after a shower, and the smell of the grass is pleasant. The shower has been heavy, and is so still in the distance, where an intensely bright double rainbow is relieved against the departing thunder-cloud. The freshly wet grass is all radiant through and through with the new sunshine; the weeds at the girl's side as bright as a Byzantine enamel, and inlaid with blue veronica; her upturned face all aglow with the light that seeks its way through her wet eyelashes. Very quiet she is —so quiet that a radiant butterfly has settled on her shoulder, and basks there in the warm sun. Against her knee, on which her poor instrument of beggary rests, leans another child, half her age—her guide; indifferent this one to sun or rain, only a little tired of waiting.'

'The Blind Girl' was sold at Christie's in 1858 for £300, and again at the Graham sale in 1886 for £871, 10s. It was presented by Mr. W. Kendwick, M.P., to the City Art Gallery at Birmingham, and is here given by permission of the Committee.

40. *The Blind Girl* (*Millais*).

A HUGUENOT

By Sir John E. Millais, p.r.a.

'When the clock of the Palais de Justice shall sound upon the great bell at daybreak, then each good Catholic must bind a slip of white linen round his arm and place a fair white cross in his cap.'—Vide *The Order of the Duc de Guise.*

THIS superb work, exhibited in the Royal Academy when its painter was but twenty-three, achieved immediately a sensational reception. To-day it still preserves its unique charm, and, despite the thousands of reproductions which have been issued for many years past, the actual painting itself has lost none of its influence nor appears vulgarised by its amazing popularity—a rare test which only great works survive. Of its school it is still deservedly first; its colour is vivid and its detail highly wrought; it may be out of touch with the theories of technique that are accepted to-day, yet it has a power to disarm criticism.

The dramatic incident of the Roman Catholic lady, who, to save her lover's life, entreats him to wear the badge which means safety, was painted from a Miss Ryan; the Huguenot himself from General Lemprière. Her dress is black, slashed with yellow at the shoulders; he wears a vivid purple tunic, with black hose and shoes; and the nasturtiums add a brilliant touch of orange red to a scheme which is not brought into melodramatic accord with the impending tragedy. Here are no lowering clouds or lurid background, but a sunny August day, within a walled garden, that suggests nothing but comfort and serenity.

This picture is one of those instanced by Mr. Ruskin that are not so much concerned with the outward verities of passing events—battles, councils, and the like—as with scenes of less outward importance (which may be even invented by the painter), and offer 'noble grounds for noble emotions.'

Even its full title, 'A Huguenot, on St. Bartholomew's Day, refusing to shield himself from danger by wearing the Roman Catholic badge,' would barely suffice to explain the pictured incident to an intelligent Oriental ignorant of Western history. It is absolutely dependent upon a literary interest outside itself, and so belongs to the field of illustration rather than of self-contained pictures. In other of Millais' pre-Raphaelite work, the drowned 'Ophelia' (perhaps his masterpiece), 'Christ in the Carpenter's Shop,' or 'Ferdinand lured by Ariel,' interpretation of the picture is perhaps less dependent upon previous knowledge of the theme; but here one feels that another title might arouse new train of thoughts, and lead the spectator to believe it was a lady bidding her knight wear her favour at a joust. This is urged, not as any criticism upon a well-nigh perfect picture, but only to reiterate the vital difference between 'illustration' and self-contained pictures.

'A Huguenot' belongs to Mr. Miller of Preston, who has hitherto declined to allow it to be photographed; hence the reproduction here is taken, unavoidably, from the well-known engraving by T. O. Barlow, first issued in 1856 by Messrs. Brooks.

41. *A Huguenot* (*Millais*).

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